



Molina Healthcare of Texas, Inc.
Testimony before
Texas House of Representatives Committee on Human Services
Chairman, James Frank
March 23, 2021

Good morning Chairman Frank, Vice Chair Hinojosa, Vice Chair Rose, Committee Members, and Guests.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of HB 133. My name is Dr. David Valdez, and I serve as the Chief Medical Officer of Molina Healthcare of Texas. In my role, I provide clinical guidance and leadership to our team of 12 physicians, 400 nurses, as well as support staff who help care for 215,000 Medicaid beneficiaries throughout Texas. I also am a practicing physician and Medicaid provider, serving as the clinical lead for the FQHC in Uvalde for almost 25 years. In these roles, I see first-hand the importance of providing Medicaid coverage to mothers for one year after delivery. The following are current examples:

- A Molina member who is 56 days post-delivery was recently enrolled in behavioral health case management due to suicidal ideation. Molina's case management team is now actively engaged with the member and has also referred her to Child and Family guidance for additional support. She is willing to see a therapist and has begun the road to recovery. With the extended eligibility period currently available under the public health emergency, Molina was able to put these services in place for our member.
- A Uvalde health center patient pregnant with her second child in two years who has advanced dental disease is restarting a dental treatment program. Her first treatment program could not be completed as she lost coverage 60 days after her first birth. Individuals with gum disease have 2 to 3 times the risk of serious cardiovascular events such as heart attack and stroke and have higher rates of poor pregnancy outcomes, including preterm birth and low birth weight.

Today, too many Texas women die during or after pregnancy from health-related conditions, the most common of which are cardiovascular disease and mental health disorders. Research has also shown that pregnancy related deaths are disproportionately found among women of color. In fact, the maternal death rate for Black women is about three times that of white women. The



good news is that most pregnancy related deaths can be prevented. Vice Chair Rose's bill will help ensure that happens.

Extended postpartum coverage provides women with access to important health services, including treatment and recovery from childbirth, follow up on pregnancy complications, management of chronic health conditions, access to family planning, and treatment for mental health conditions. Providing coverage for the year after pregnancy will:

- Facilitate continuity of care for women as they transition from the physician who delivered their baby to a primary care physician who can ensure ongoing physical and behavioral health screenings,
- Improve access to integrated behavioral health care for women with mental and substance use disorders,
- Promote safe birth spacing, and
- Improve the lifelong health of children who need a healthy mother.

Molina shares your commitment to improving the Medicaid program and keeping Texas mothers and their children healthy.

Thank you again for allowing me to testify before you today, and again, I ask for your support of HB 133 by Vice Chair Rose.

This concludes my testimony. I would be happy to take any questions you may have.